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Legal and policy frameworks, including critical issues related to authoritative data

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Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to bring to the attention of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management its report on the legal and policy issues to be considered in developing a framework to support global geospatial information management in the public and private sectors, including critical issues related to authoritative data. The report is available in the language of submission only from the website of the Committee of Experts (http://ggim.un.org/ggim_committee.html). The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the way forward in addressing the issue.

Summary of the report

At its second session, held in August 2012, the Committee of Experts discussed a number of substantive items concerning the need to evolve consistent and transparent policies and laws in areas such as data privacy, licensing, ownership, national security, liability and intellectual property. In its reports on the inventory of issues (E/C.20/2012/5) and on future trends in geospatial information management (E/C.20/2012/3), the Secretariat specifically identified institutional arrangements and legal and policy frameworks as critical issues for the Committee of Experts to address in the coming years.

* E/C.20/2013/1.

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The value of geospatial information is now recognized around the globe, and world leaders are interested in using the data to address such critical global issues as sustainable development and disaster response preparedness. While the geospatial community recognizes that "a location-enabled society" is achievable in terms of the availability of technical tools and methodologies, the legal and policy frameworks required to facilitate the progress of such a society lag far behind.

A recent survey prepared by the Committee of Experts, profiling the status of national geospatial information management systems in Member States (see E/C.20/2013/5), has provided a comprehensive picture of the impact that legal and policy issues have on geospatial information management by Member States. The results of the survey indicate that legal and policy issues pose a challenge to Governments in their efforts to collect, use and distribute geospatial information. The challenge will become even greater as Governments, the private sector, universities, non-governmental organizations and citizens become increasingly involved as both producers and consumers of geospatial information.